

WE CLAIM:

1. A computerized recall management system, comprising:
 - an early warning system, responsive to product performance data, to detect a pattern of product defects therefrom and generate an alert,
 - a recall operations system, storing data representing procedures to be followed to process a recall of defective products,
 - a recall repository to store data representing performance of the recall, and
 - a notification system, storing a report template representing recall reporting requirements, to generate a report from data of the recall repository according to parameters defined in the report template.
2. The recall management system of claim 1, further comprising a cockpit application to manage communication with external entities in a manner specific to a classification applied to each entity with which it communicates.
3. The recall management system of claim 2, wherein external entities are classified into one of the following groups: customers, media, partners and regulators.
4. The recall management system of claim 1, wherein the early warning system is further to perform product distribution modeling to determine an extent to which defect products have been distributed.
5. The recall management system of claim 1, wherein the notification system comprises a plurality of reporting templates, each one unique to a predetermined audience classification.
6. The recall management system of claim 5, wherein audience classifications comprise customers, media, partners and regulators.
7. A method of detecting product defects, comprising:
 - responsive to product performance data, comparing the performance data to performance benchmarks,
 - when the comparison identifies an instance of product performance that fails a benchmark, determining whether the instance relates to a previously undetected product defect,

if so, generating an alert.

8. The method of claim 7, further comprising, if the instance relates to a previously detected product defect, determining whether the instance indicates that the defect is occurring within the product at a rate that exceeds statistical limits established for the defect and, if so, generating an alert.

9. The method of claim 7, further comprising performing diffusion modeling for the product to determine an extent to which defective products have proliferated in a distribution chain for the product.

10. A recall notification method, comprising:
establishing a session between an automated notification agent and a terminal,
classifying the terminal as one of a predetermined number of audience member types,
and
regulating the terminal's access to recall repository data based upon the terminal's classified audience member type.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the audience member types comprise customers, media, partners and regulators.

12. The method of claim 10, further comprising generating a recall notification report to a member of at least one audience member type, the report structured according to a report template that is specific to the respective audience member type.

13. The method of claim 10, further comprising generating a recall notification report to a member of at least one audience member type at a time determined by a milestone template that is specific to the respective audience member type.

14. The method of claim 10, further comprising generating a recall notification report to a member of at least one audience member type, the member being identified from a contacts management data structure of the notification agent.

15. A recall operations system comprising:
a recall protocol template storing definitions of recall procedures to be used with respect to an instance of a product recall,

a recall repository, and
a recall management agent, responsive to the recall protocol template, to:
 authenticate individual participants of the recall,
 transfer to authenticated participants, recall tracking information and recall notification information, and
 record authenticated participants' receipt of the recall notification information to in the recall repository.

16. The system of claim 15, wherein the recall management agent further:
 communicates to service technicians an authorization specifying remediation to be performed upon a defective product, and
 processes compensation for the service technicians upon receipt of a confirmation that the remediation has been performed.

17. Computer readable medium having instructions stored thereon that, when executed by a processing device, causes the device to:
 responsive to product performance data, compare the performance data to performance benchmarks,
 when the comparison identifies an instance of product performance that fails a benchmark, determine whether the instance relates to a previously undetected product defect, and
 if so, generate an alert.

18. The medium of claim 17, wherein, if the instance relates to a previously detected product defect, the instructions further cause the device to determine whether the instance indicates that the defect is occurring within the product at a rate that exceeds statistical limits established for the defect and, if so, generating an alert.

19. The medium of claim 17, wherein the instructions further cause the device to perform diffusion modeling for the product to determine an extent to which defective products have proliferated in a distribution chain for the product.